



Parking Advisory Committee

Date: December 2, 2020

Time: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation

Minutes

Members in Attendance: Ali Carter, Daniel Amstutz, Adam Chapdelaine, Leland Stein, Phyllis Marshall, Mike Rademacher, John Hurd, Howard Muise, Corey Rateau, Jill Mirak.

Guests: Darcy Devney.

1. Greetings and introductions, ground rules for online meetings.

Adam Chapdelaine read a set of prepared remarks explaining the procedures that the Committee would follow to hold a virtual meeting. Governor Baker signed an Executive Order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic allowing virtual meetings, which suspended the usual Open Meeting Law requirement that a quorum of committee members be physically present in order to hold an official committee meeting. Chapdelaine confirmed the committee members in attendance for the meeting.

2. Approval of the minutes for the September 2020 meeting.

Minutes were approved.

3. Update on parking meter collections and enforcement.

Phyllis Marshall said they have been providing monthly parking permits for the Town-owned lots; they also provided permits to Robbins Library staff for their lot at no cost. Businesses have requested parking permits as well. There have been some minor technical issues with the meters, including the new ones installed on Broadway, but Republic Parking, IPS and APD has helped address them. Some meters were damaged by the contractor on the Arlington Center Sidewalk Project and the contractor will need to pay back the Town for that damage.

Corey Rateau said enforcement was a little slow to begin due to some staff out sick. Despite the messaging that parking collections was back in

place some drivers claimed they didn't know they had to pay again. Some staff scheduling had to be adjusted with it being free to park in the Center on Saturdays during December. Chapdelaine shared that the Parking Control Officers assisted the Clerk's Office with the recent elections during the period parking collections and enforcement was suspended. He applauded their work helping the Clerk.

4. PaybyPhone/mobile parking payment rollout and updates.

Rateau noted there were some quality control issues with PaybyPhone when it came to putting the proper parking zones in place. He also had to work out some technical issues with Cardinal Tracking in terms of ensuring the parking zone information showed up properly for enforcement, and some mobile handheld hardware issues to work out. Otherwise, it has been going well.

Daniel Amstutz shared a report from PaybyPhone on the usage of their app for mobile parking payment. As of November 24, about 1,450 transactions have been processed; there have been about 900 unique users of PaybyPhone in Arlington; \$2,650 in parking revenue has been generated (not accounting for the per transaction fee); the average transaction cost has been \$1.83; and most parking sessions start at 8 am and level off over the day. David Gow, the main point of contact at PaybyPhone, noted that the Arlington usage levels over the first month outpaced the Town of Wellesley, another community that started with PaybyPhone this year. An adoption rate of 15%-20% a year from now of all parking transactions would be considered a success from their perspective. Rateau noted that they have heard from drivers that they are glad to have the mobile parking option available to them. Chapdelaine noted that having a touchless option is great to have due to COVID-19. He thanked staff for their assistance in implementing this project.

5. Wrap-up of Arlington Center Sidewalk project.

Mike Rademacher said this project is substantially complete, besides some final punchlist items. Amstutz asked about the lighting improvements in the area of the project. Rademacher noted the lighting improvements were separate from the rest of the sidewalk project and is still ongoing. Leland Stein said he was pleased with the project and thought it turned out very well. Chapdelaine reiterated that about \$186,500 had been used from the Parking Benefit District for this project, so it shows how the funds are being used for important upgrades in the Center. Darcy Devney suggested making this known in some outreach from the Town. Chapdelaine thought this is a good idea and also to remind people that the meters are active and PaybyPhone is available.

He also thanked Rademacher for his work on this project.

6. Parking Benefit District funding – discuss availability and use for future projects.

Chapdelaine said this discussion should be to discuss some ideas about future use of PBD funds and then to follow up with a meeting in January to finalize them. The use of the funds needs to be brought to the Finance Committee in advance of it being presented to Town Meeting for approval. Amstutz noted that there had been recent internal discussions about using future PBD funds to address sidewalk repair on Mass Ave west of Mystic and Pleasant, which was a catalyst to bringing this agenda item to the committee. Ali Carter said improvements to the Russell Common Lot, particularly with lighting, would be another important project. Chapdelaine noted that a conversation with Rademacher would be a good idea to understand more about how to move forward with improvements to the lot. He also noted that the Center Sidewalk Project cost about \$1 million and there were going to be costs associated with renovating Broadway Plaza as well. Repairing the sidewalk on Mass Ave west of Mystic/Pleasant could have a cost in that same range. Repaving and fixing issues with the Russell Common Lot could also be as expensive, based on the estimates from Waterfield.

Rateau suggested that addressing the safety of the crosswalk at Water Street and Peg Spengler Way should be a priority. Chapdelaine agreed. Howard Muise noted that the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) intends to study and make recommendations for the unsignalized crosswalks between Academy Street and Water Street. Chapdelaine suggested also reviewing the conceptual design created by VHB for Mass Ave Redesign Phase 2. Devney asked if there were other furnishing items like benches, bike racks, and solar trash cans that were planned as well. Chapdelaine noted that some of these items have been purchased but there may be other locations that need these improvements. Amstutz noted there is funding for bike parking that he is working with this fiscal year that could place more bike racks in the Center; also, new bike racks were placed by Whittemore Park through funding from the MassDOT Shared Spaces Grant Program. Carter said she also has bike racks and lighting purchased through this grant program that haven't been placed yet that could be put towards needed locations. Chapdelaine clarified that the funding being discussed is for fiscal year 2022, to be available July, 2021. Some funding is already being used for flower planters in the Center and he would like to make that a year-long program. Muise asked if there was funding intended for snow removal as well. Chapdelaine said that had been included in the budget but he wasn't sure DPW had charged to it. Rademacher said sidewalk clearing is challenging; removing snow banks and making parking meters accessible is something DPW already plans a budget for.

It would be very costly to routinely clear all the sidewalks, depending on the winter. Carter added that the MassDOT grant program allows for funds to be spent to buy sidewalk clearing equipment. Rademacher said sidewalk plows wouldn't work for all areas because of impediments along the sidewalk, and so they would still need to be shoveled by hand. Rateau supported clearing snow around the meters to also help parking enforcement. There was discussion of other ways of clearing and removing snow for accessibility on the sidewalks.

Jill Mirak asked about whether there is a Town staff member charged with cleaning Broadway Plaza, particularly the tree leaves in the fall. Rademacher noted they have someone regularly picking up trash but not clearing out leaves from the Plaza.

Stein said having some funds for the holidays next year for lighting, wayfinding, and welcoming would be appreciated. Mirak said getting a mural on the wall of the building that faces Kickstand Café would be a great spot. Carter said the public art curator has been considering this. Chapdelaine noted the Town has not had much success working with that particular property owner in the past. However, a temporary mural has been added to Park Terrace just off Medford Street. Carter said a more permanent mural could be considered later, and lighting could be added between that building and Arlington Catholic. Mirak said the corner of Swan Place and Mass Ave in front of Kickstand Café could also be improved.

Amstutz asked Marshall about the funds available in the PBD fund for projects next year. Marshall noted it's been a significant period of no meter collection revenue but costs have still needed to be paid. She said she can put together the budget information for the next meeting. Rateau added that making on-street meters free on Saturday during the holidays (instead of just the parking lots) will also impact meter revenues.

7. Any other business.

Amstutz noted that Steve Barrett from Arlington Catholic will replace Linda Butt on the committee since Butt has taken on other duties with the school.

8. Adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 PM.